

Remarks and Arguments

Claims 1-16 have been presented for examination. Claims 1, 7, 15 and 16 have been amended.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 10 and 13-16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0126246 (Blouin.) The examiner comments that the Blouin reference discloses all of the claimed limitations.

The present invention is related to routing data through data forwarding devices in a network. The system maintains a single routing table that contains information describing a plurality of dead-lock free alternative routes. This routing table is used to generate forwarding tables that are delivered to each of the forwarding devices in the network. In particular, a final enabled routing, which includes no alternative routes, is selected from the plurality of alternative routes using a performance metric, such as network capacity or fault tolerance. The final enabled routing is then used to create a plurality of forwarding tables, which are then delivered to the forwarding devices in the network. Each forwarding table includes no alternative routes and, together, the forwarding tables implement the final enabled routing. This is described in the instant specification, for example at page 7, line 25 to page 8, line 24. Thus, in the present invention, the optimization of the final enabled routing is made at the single routing table and then forwarding tables, which contain no alternative routes, are delivered to the forwarding devices to implement the overall scheme.

This operation is in contrast to the operation of the system disclosed in the Blouin reference. In this system, route-sets are initially calculated and delivered to the forwarding devices (edge controllers.) These route-sets include a plurality of alternative routes as described in Blouin at paragraph 0070. During the operation of this system, one of the alternative routes is selected based on route-ranking and a connection signaling technique that determines the availability of the routes. This arrangement is described in Blouin at paragraphs 0077-0079. Thus, the Blouin reference discloses a system in which routes are selected from alternative routes by the forwarding devices. Therefore, it suffers from the drawbacks set forth in the instant specification at page 3, line 31 to page 4, line 14.

The differences between the instant invention and the Blouin system are recited in the claims. Claim 1 is illustrative. It recites, in lines 3-12, "...obtaining information describing a plurality of alternative routes ... from a single routing table ... selecting a final enabled routing from said plurality of alternative routes, wherein said selecting optimizes a performance metric; and delivering a forwarding table to each forwarding device in said communication network, the forwarding tables containing no alternative routes and causing the forwarding devices to implement the final enabled routing." The "final enabled routing" is described in the instant specification at page 8, lines 7-15 and includes no alternative routes. It is clear in Blouin that the route-sets that are distributed do include alternative routes and that the final route selection is performed during the system operation. Thus, Blouin does not disclose the system as recited in claim 1 and claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the cited system.

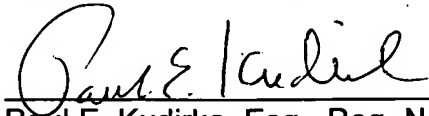
Independent claims 7, 15 and 16 have been amended in a manner similar to the manner in which claim 1 has been amended and contain parallel limitations. Therefore, they distinguish over the cited reference in the same manner as claim 1.

Claims 2, 4, 8, 10, 13 and 14 are dependent, either directly or indirectly, on one of independent claims 1 and 7 and incorporate the limitations thereof. Therefore, they distinguish over the cited reference in the same manner as claims 1 and 7. The remaining claims have been indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

In light of the forgoing amendments and remarks, this application is now believed in condition for allowance and a notice of allowance is earnestly solicited. If the examiner has any further questions regarding this amendment, she is invited to call

applicants' attorney at the number listed below. The examiner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or direct any payment under 37 C.F.R. §§1.17, 1.16 to Deposit Account number 02-3038.

Respectfully submitted



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